

# FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB OF BALLARAT

## EXCURSION/NEWS SHEET

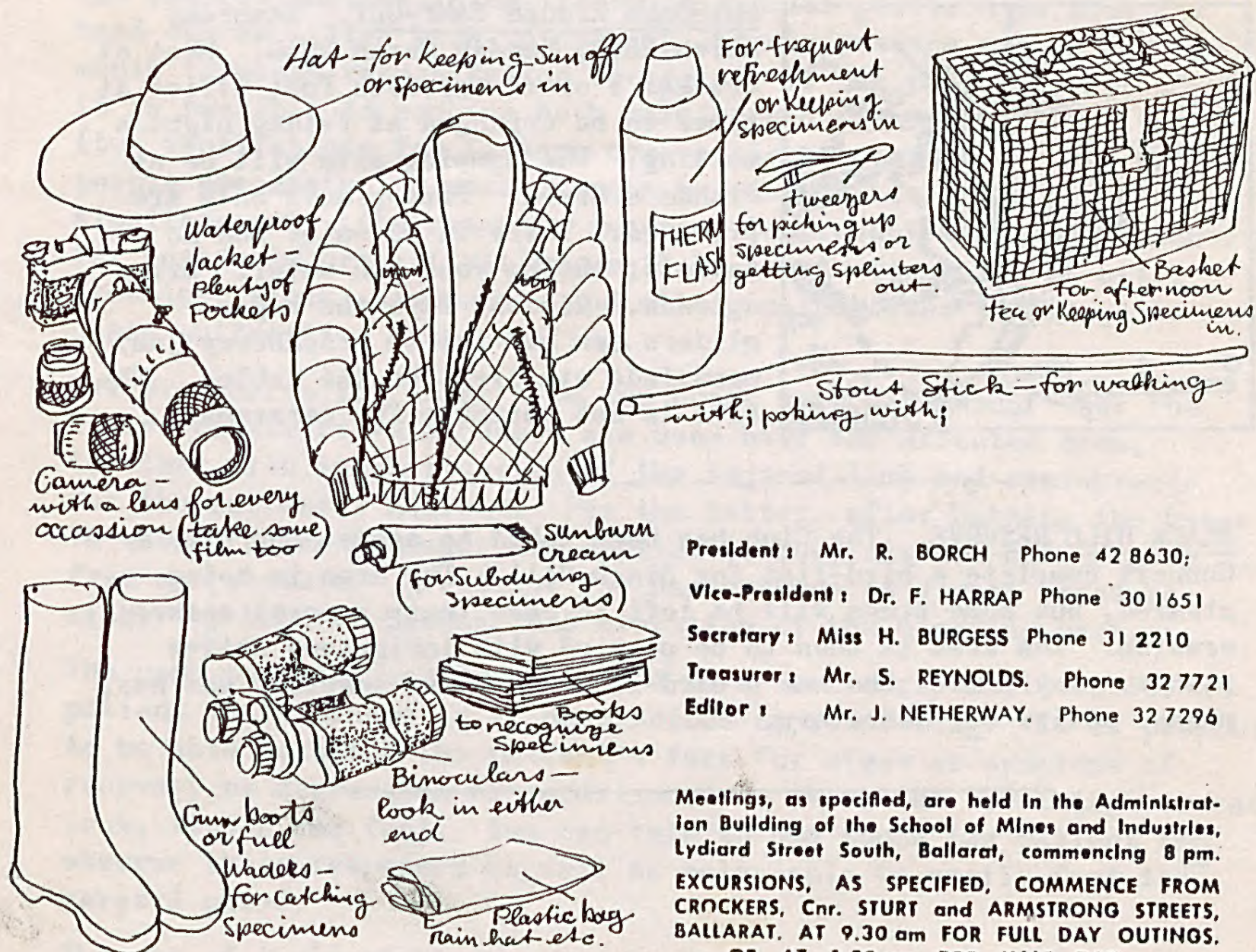
March, 1981

Meeting : 6th March - Annual Meeting - Members' Night.

Meeting : 3rd April - "Victorian Native Fish" - Dr. Phillip Cadwallader.

Excursion : 15th March - Sunday - Full Day - Skipton Caves  
- Leaders: Mr. P. Fry; Mr. C. Notman.

Excursion : 28th/29th March - Brisbane Ranges Camp-out  
Leader: Mr. L. Fink.



President : Mr. R. BORCH Phone 42 8630;

Vice-President : Dr. F. HARRAP Phone 30 1651

Secretary : Miss H. BURGESS Phone 31 2210

Treasurer : Mr. S. REYNOLDS. Phone 32 7721

Editor : Mr. J. NETHERWAY. Phone 32 7296

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Administration Building of the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 8 pm.  
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS, BALLARAT. AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS. OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.



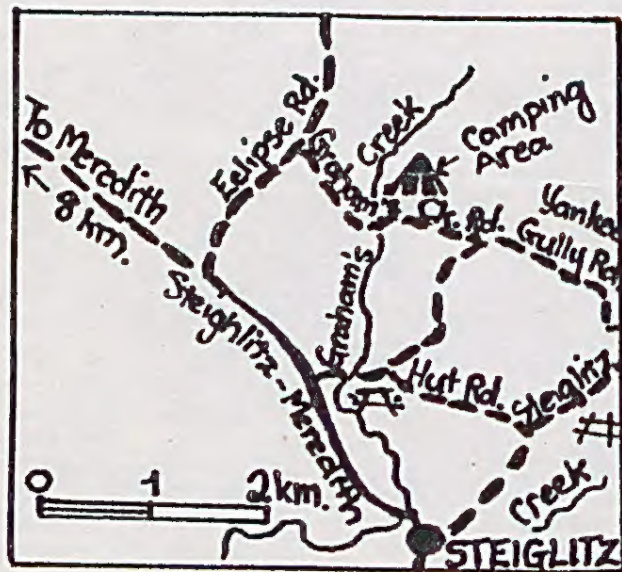
SKIPTON CAVES EXCURSION. Note the change of date as printed in the syllabus. It is now on Sunday 15th March. Old clothes, waterproof pants if possible, stout walking shoes or golf shoes, hat are recommended for this excursion.

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On display at the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery until 15th March - two galleries of paintings of native birds and plants, many by convict painter William Buelow Gould. One of the paintings, "Birds", has at least twelve birds in it, all having been shot, apparently by means of the muzzle-loading shot-gun which also appears in the painting.

Greg Binns issues a challenge to members to see how many of the birds they can identify.

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BRISBANE RANGES CAMP-OUT. Saturday March 28th, Sunday March 29th. Meet at Crocker's or at Meredith Post Office at times to be arranged at Friday night's meeting. The camping site will be at Graham's Creek. Fire-places only are provided. There is no water and no toilets. Bring your own water. Bring a torch. Lindsay says the sugar-gliders are partial to blackberry jam, marmalade etc. left on the tables. The site is not suitable for caravans.

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BLACK HILL RESERVE. The Club has been asked to assist the City Council complete a bird-list for Black Hill. The area is being cleared, but some pines will be left in case their removal causes erosion. The area is then to be planted with indigenous native plants. Any member who has a bird-list, or knows somebody who has, please advise our Secretary.

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## FIRST AID IN THE BUSH

To introduce us to the theme for the evening of First Aid in the Bush Mr. Peter Phelan, a first aider from Telecom, and our President Mr. Rob. Borch gave to the members a combined presentation of film, discussion and demonstration.

The emphasis was on cardiac pulmonary resuscitation - C.P.R., for when clinical death occurs there is only a margin of 3-4 minutes for the first aider to work to attempt to restore breathing and circulation.

The film "The New Pulse of Life" is an American film describing clearly the importance of heart and lung resuscitation and the occasions when such emergencies could arise. There was also an interesting history of the development in methods of resuscitation.

The order of priorities are straight forward:-

A - Airways,            B - Breathing,            C - Circulation.

The patient must be lying firmly in a prone position so that the head can be tilted back to open up the air passage and so enable mouth to mouth resuscitation to begin. If one person is attending it is possible to combine both cardiac and pulmonary resuscitation (two ventilations for fifteen compressions on chest). When two people are assisting each one can be responsible for a process simultaneously, the rescuers swapping to prevent weariness. Concerns for bush/outdoors activities would be heart attack, snake bite, drowning, shock, haemorrhage and allergic reactions to stings to cause suffocation from swelling.

New procedures for snake bite and burns were discussed. For the former constrictive bandages are used over the affected area, together with immobilization of the injured limb and reassurance for the patient's anxiety. For the latter, after bathing the burns in water, clean bandages are applied to keep air out and as germ free as possible. Treatment for haemorrhage is direct pressure either by hand or bandage and elevation of the bleeding part.

The coma position was demonstrated as a necessary position for a patient to be placed in if unconscious or recovering. It is possible to be able to watch the patient's face for signs or symptoms of recovery or degression of condition. To check the breathing you can look, listen and feel. You can talk to and touch the patient and observe their responses as well as being able to easily feel the carotid pulse.

The use of the portable manikin by Peter and Rob helped to revise



for us the important points talked about and seen in the film.

We were reminded of the need to know local emergency phone numbers for ambulance, fire and police and when using the phone to call for assistance to be able to describe signs and symptoms of patient's condition as well as location of patient.

A worthwhile and necessary lecture, for the skills can be used for saving lives not only in the bush but wherever accidents occur.

Geoff Hocking thanked our speakers.

Margaret Tonkin.

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EXCURSION TO OCEAN GROVE: February 8th, 1981

For a number of reasons, more especially the very high forecast temperature, only four members visited the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve. There were more helpers from the Geelong Club and Owen Andrews, than there were visitors.

After looking around the Information Centre which contains a small museum and is well decorated with natural history posters we had lunch. Then we went to see the tree - *Eucalyptus Viminalis* - which was planted on behalf of our club about 6 years ago.

From there to the newly developed small lake for water birds. Several areas around the lake have been planted with native shrubs and trees. In fact 2 thousand shrubs and trees have been planted in the 12 years since the reserve was established in a total area of 143 hectares, 62 ha being added in 1975.

We moved out of the newer block into block No. 1, which is virgin bushland unlike block No. 2 which had been nearly half cleared for housing development by its previous owner. Block No. 1 is well timbered with Silver Banksia, Golden, Hedge and Black Wattle, Black and Drooping She Oak with small pockets of Coast Tea-tree and Coast Pomadenis. The eucalypts here are Manna and Swamp Gum.

There are several bird observation hides in the block and we spent an hour in one situated over a waterhole.

In the hour we saw brown thornbill, white browed scrub wren, scarlet robin, yellow robin, new holland honeyeater, red browed finch and green finch. There was a cool breeze blowing through the hide and we enjoyed a respite from the heat while watching the birds bathing or drinking. Other birds seen in the reserve included Black Shouldered Kite, Common Bronze-wing pigeon, Spine-tailed Swift, Rufous Whistler.



On the way back to Ballarat we called in to see Jack Wheeler to wish him well.

Our thanks to Geelong Naturalists' and Mr. Owen Andrews for their help and for permission to quote from the Ocean Grove brochure.

Frank Harrap.

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### GREENHILL LAKE

Greenhill Lake or Warrayatkin Park is situated some 5 km east of Ararat, immediately south of the prison and adjoining the Adelaide to Melbourne railway line and Western Hwy. Access is gained to the area by turning north off the Highway, past the roadhouse, through a gate to the Ararat Archery Club.

The reserve covers an area of around 330 Ha.

Late last century an embankment was constructed to impound the water flowing down various inlet creeks from the 8000 Ha catchment, and so a lake was formed for swimming and some bathing activities. The embankment has since been breached and the area reverted to a large swampy area which dries up in summer.

There have been discussions and plans put forward for some time on the re-development of the area. The Ararat City Council is now aware of the high value the lake could have for wild fowl and so wishes to plan developments for the Reserve along the following dual purpose lines :

1. To encourage and conserve wildlife, especially wild fowl within the park, while
2. providing water-based recreational facilities in close proximity to Ararat.

I have been working on such a plan and consider that these two objectives can be met if the Park is managed properly.

Very rarely is such a large tract of wetland still available in semi natural condition so near a medium-sized city centre.

All members are invited to inspect the site to gather more information on birds and animals which visit the area and to come up with any of their own development ideas.

Finally, since I am leaving the Ballarat area to continue my studies, I would just like to say thanks for the hospitality and interest shown by members over the past 3 years.

Greg Creek.



## CASTLEMAINE CAMP-OUT - CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association and the Western Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association Combined campout at Castlemaine, March 7-8-9, 1981.

Provisional Excursion Arrangements - Meet at Car Park, Downes St, Botanic Gard.

### SATURDAY 7TH MARCH

Morning Excursions - 9.30 a.m. For the early arrivals

- sewerage Ponds - birds; item 1 on the map.
- a walk in Kalimna Park - general. Item 3 on map.

Afternoon Excursions - 1.30 p.m.

- Historical tour of Castlemaine - conducted by Historical Society
- A tour of Fryerstown/Vaughan- historical/geological/general.
- Maldon/Tarrengower - historical/geological/general.

### SUNDAY 8TH MARCH

Morning Excursions - 9.30 a.m.

- Local geology
- Expedition Pass - birds and general
- The Fryers Ridge - botany (if Spring is 6 months early!)

Afternoon excursions - 1.30 p.m.

- Historical tour of Castlemaine - a repeat of Saturday's excursion
- Maldon/Mt Tarrengower - a repeat of Saturday's excursion
- Expedition Pass - a repeat of the morning's excursion
- Mt Alexander and the Koala Park.

### MONDAY 9TH MARCH

Morning Excursions - 9.30 a.m.

- Expedition Pass - a repeat of Sunday's excursions
- Mt. Alexander and Koala Park - a repeat of Sunday's excursion
- Local Geology

Afternoon excursions - 1.30 p.m. These will be short (in time) e.g. Mt. Franklin to the South, possibly Mt. Tarrengower and Bells Swamp to the West.

PLEASE NOTE: EXCURSIONS ACTUALLY HELD COULD CHANGE, DEPENDING ON WEATHER CONDITIONS AND NUMBERS ATTENDING, AND DEMAND.

Evening events. Evening events will be held in the Uniting Church Hall, Campbell St., Castlemaine. (Almost opposite the Total Service Station in Barker St.)

### SATURDAY MARCH 7TH

6.30 General Business meeting of W.V.F.N.C.A.

8.00 Launching of Mr. C. Beagleholes book, "The Distribution and Conservation of Vascular Plants of the Alpine Area, Victoria" by Mr. Frank Robbins.



- 8.15 Evening program  
- Plant propagation - Geoff Sitch  
- Birds of Central Vic - arranged by George Broadway and Stan Bruton.

SUNDAY MARCH 8TH

- 6.30 Annual Meeting of V.F.N.C.A.  
8.00 Evening Program - aspects of Castlemaine District - presented by members of Castlemaine F.N.C.

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We are indebted to the Editor of "Whirrakee" and author Ray Wallace for the following interesting article from the Jan/Feb monthly newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalists' Club.

CURLEWS AND WHIMBRELS: THE GENUS NUMENIUS

by Ray Wallace.

During November 1980 whilst observing waders at the Metropolitan Farm, Werribee, I was fortunate enough to observe two Little Whimbrels, one of Victoria's more uncommon waders. They are rather handsome birds, with rich brown upper parts complemented by the black primaries of the wings. The underparts are somewhat paler. Unlike all the other members of its genus, the Little Whimbrel's bill is not exceptionally long and bow-shaped. The Eastern Curlew, its very long billed near relative, can often be seen at both Werribee and Altona.

The genus NUMENIUS has a membership of six to eight species, (depending on the authority consulted) throughout the world. The European Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Eastern Curlew (*N. madagascariensis*), American Curlew (*N. americanus*), Whimbrel (*N. phaeopus*), American Whimbrel or Hudsonian Curlew (*N. p. hudsonicus* - sometimes given full species status as *N. hudsonicus*), Bristle-thighed Curlew (*N. tahitiensis*), Eskimo Curlew (*N. borealis*) and Little Whimbrel (*N. minutus* - regarded as the Asian race of *N. borealis* by some authorities) make up this genus, which is so rich in ornithological history and literary associations. The English tramp-poet, W.H. Davies, summed up the feeling of wild romance conjured up by these birds of lonely marshes, wild shores and Arctic tundra when he wrote of the European Curlew :

"Over the marshes crieth the Curlew  
Weird is its music, wild is its home"

On the Eastern seaboard of the United States in the 1880's in their great migration flights from North-West Canada to Argentina the Eskimo Curlews rivalled the now extinct Passenger Pigeon in numbers, travelling in dense flocks of millions. It almost shared the fate of the Passenger Pigeon and by the end of last century the vast migratory flocks ceased to be observed. Where had the "Dough Bird" or "Prairie Pigeon" gone? Shooting for game had reduced their numbers to a perilous level.



Gone were the days when a single blast from a muzzle-loading shotgun could bag 28 birds. Extinction was presumed to be their fate, but odd tantalizing reports still trickled in of Eskimo Curlew sightings in the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1860's another species had re-emerged from oblivion. Small numbers of Eskimo Curlews were observed on their age-old migratory flights, mainly in Texas. A pathetic remnant of the vast flocks of the past, their vulnerability is increased by the search for oil in the far North.

In 1785 Captain James Cook's voyaging led him to Tahiti. It was on this expedition that the Bristle-thighed Curlew was discovered. Long a bird of mystery, by 1948 it was the only bird in North America whose nesting site was unknown. In that year, an ornithological expedition was mounted to the wild tundra regions in the vicinity of the mouth of the Yukon River. This expedition was led by one of the almost legendary figures of American ornithology, Arthur A. Allen, and expedition members David Allen and Henry Kyllingstad had the honour of finding the first nest of the Bristle-thighed Curlew. The Bristle-thigh's mystery was vanquished. The discovery made headlines right across Northern America, imparting a sense of the dramatic. Some of them read thus : "Curlew's Nesting Place Is Found: 163 Year Search Ends in Alaska", "Bristle Thighs at Home", "Curlew Mystery Solved" and one paper announced the discovery to an enthralled nation in the simple statement - "They Found It".

One hundred and sixty three years of mystery had passed since Captain Cook had discovered the species in Tahiti to the finding of its nesting site in Alaska. One could use William Butler Yeats' words in regard to the Bristle-thighed Curlew:

"O curlew, cry no more in the air,  
Or only to the water in the West . . ."

for now millions of Americans were familiar, by name at least, with the Bristle-thigh, even if most would never see one.

Of this intriguing family four species have been observed in Australia. They are the Whimbrel, the Little Whimbrel, the Eastern Curlew and the European Curlew, which has been recorded only once in Northern Australia. One must remember also not to confuse the migrant Curlews with our own quite different Stone-curlews which are quite dissimilar in appearance and belong to a different family.

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